

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-8 remain pending in this application. Claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly distinguish the invention as supported by the specification. Accordingly, no new matter has been added by this amendment.

Interview

Applicants acknowledge, with appreciation, the telephone interview conducted on March 25, 2009. The Examiner agreed that if claim 1 was amended to conform with our remarks, the claims would distinguish over the prior art.

Rejections: § 103

Upon receiving the Advisory Action mailed March 20, 2009, it was apparent that the Examiner recognized that the present invention distinguished over the teachings of Taniguchi et al., but the Examiner disagreed that the claims made that distinction clear. Specifically, the Examiner interpreted the claims to read on an alleged division of at least two, plural small bundles (4) between the lower ring-side adhesion layer (5') and the cartridge head-side adhesion fixation layer (5). Applicant respectfully disagrees with that interpretation for the reasons already of record, but have presented an amendment to claim 1 that even more clearly distinguishes over the teachings of Taniguchi et al.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the division of at least part of the hollow fiber membrane bundles between the lower layer and the head-side layer is "such that there are more bundles at the head-side adhesion fixation layer than the lower ring-side adhesion layer." Support for this limitation can be found, for example, in Figure 1 where bundle (1) at the lower layer is divided into a plurality of smaller bundles (10) at the

head-side layer. It was understood that the Examiner agreed that such an amendment would overcome the rejections of record and place this application in condition for allowance.

Prompt and favorable reconsideration of this application is requested.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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